PM 1.18 : 11/4

Consideration of Non-status Candidates

In a recent memorandum Office of Personnel Management Deputy Director Jule Sugarman outlined to agency and department heads the policies which establish Federal agencies' responsibility to safeguard and increase the opportunity of all qualified individuals to compete equitably for Federal jobs.

The Civil Service Reform Act requires that the Federal Government recruit from all segments of society, and select and advance on the basis of ability, knowledge, and skills, under fair and open competition. The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection further underscore the Federal Government's commitment to equal employment opportunity. The guidelines prohibit selection procedures which adversely impact on the selection of members of any group unless justified by business necessity.

In adhering to an open and fair system, agencies should examine their employment practices and the impact of these on all groups. Minorities and women continue to be significantly underrepresented in the Federal work force, and are particularly adversely affected by status limitations. To comply with these policies, agencies must maximize concurrent consideration of external and internal candidates when staffing positions to reduce or eliminate adverse impact. Only by means of concurrent consideration will affirmative action efforts effectively address the employment needs of minorities participating Hispanics and women.

The recruitment and consideration of outside, non-status candidates is a bona fide method for eliminating underrepresentation. Deputy Director Sugarman said, "As an important priority in the Federal Government affirmative action efforts, and in line with our goal of having a Federal Personnel System which will contribute more effectively to the achievement of equal opportunity, I encourage you to fill all positions in your agencies in a way that will ensure full utilization of talent inside and outside the government."

Spotlight

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Vietnam Veterans Week

President Carter proclaimed the week of May 28 through June 3 as Vietnam Veterans Week. The President said, "I urge my fellow citizens and my fellow veterans, and their groups and organizations to honor the patriotism of these veterans, and to recognize their civilian contributions to their communities in America today."

Over 345,000 Vietnam era veterans work for the Federal Government, according to statistics compiled by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). In all, 1,250,000 veterans represented 45 percent of the 2,750,000 Federal work force as of last December. Vietnam era veterans accounted for 12 percent of the total work force and over 27 percent of the veterans. Of 179,000 disabled veterans, 25 percent are Vietnam era veterans.

OPM Director, Alan Campbell said, "I firmly believe our country and the Federal Government have a special obligation to assist veterans who need help, particularly those of the Vietnam era. We are committed, even in times of limited hiring, to fulfilling that obligation." Director Campbell asked heads of departments and agencies last December to make greater use of the Veterans Readjustment Appointment (VRA) authority which permits direct hiring of many Vietnam veterans with later conversion into career positions.

More than 125,000 Vietnam era veterans have received employment assistance through the VRA program since it began in 1970.

Women in Law Enforcement

The Task Force on Women in Federal Law Enforcement has completed a survey of women in Federal law enforcement jobs which reveals existing impediments in the hiring, promotion and equal treatment of women in these occupations. The task force was established by the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Women's Program Office and is comprised of FWP Managers and women law enforcement officers from 14 Federal agencies.

The survey results were based on 749 questionnaires returned from women law enforcement officers in seven agencies. The jobs which were surveyed included inspectors, patrol officers, special agents, import specialists, correctional officers, Deputy U.S. Marshals and compliance investigators.

Part of the findings reveal that: different but better treatment than male coworkers brings resentment which causes isolation; women want to be selected and evaluated by their supervisors for their abilities and not because

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Upward Mobility: Moving Along

NHSTA

The Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently selected the first five participants for its upward mobility program. NHTSA is responsible for reducing accidents, deaths and injuries on the nation's highways and has about 800 permanent employees.

The Upward Mobility Program was an item in the 1978-1979 NHTSA Affirmative Action Plan which recognized the concentration of minorities and women in non-professional jobs. With firm support from the NHTSA Administrator, Joan Claybrook, the program was initiated to provide advancement opportunities for high potential employees serving in dead end jobs at the GS-4 through GS-9 levels. Eligibility was restricted to permanent NHTSA employees. Initially five bridge positions were established.

The NHTSA Office of Personnel conducted two orientation sessions for eligible candidates to explain the mechanics of the program, answer questions and present a realistic picture of the commitment expected from an upward mobility trainee.

The personnel office then issued a vacancy announcement under the Merit Promotion Program seeking candidates for each of the five bridge positions — program assistant, computer aid, highway assistant, safety defects assistant and contract technical assistant. The jobs were established at the GS-4 and GS-5 levels. A single application gave candidates consideration for all five jobs. Target positions are at the GS-7 level in a professional job series.

Since the assessment of potential is a primary objective of the evaluation process, NHTSA decided to use an assessment center approach in the screening of candidates. An assessment center is a simulation process in which candidates use the actual skills and abilities required in the target job.

Of 20 candidates who completed the assessment center, 13 emerged as qualified for at least one of the target jobs. The final selections were made after interviews by both a special panel and the supervisors of the target positions. One supervisor who interviewed candidates noted that, "there were at least five people who could have filled my job, but, unfortunately, I had one choice."

NHTSA has an approved training agreement with the Office of Personnel Management for the Upward Mobility Program. The agreement allows trainees to receive credit for a year of qualifying experience for the target position through six months of intensive on-the-job training.

Joan Claybrook, NHTSA Administator, met with the upward mobility trainees after their selection to express her congratulations personally and to reaffirm her support for the upward mobility program. In a memo to each trainee she noted that the months ahead would be challenging but also rewarding, and she encouraged them to exploit the opportunity.

For more information contact NHTSA, Office of Personnel, Room 5306, NASSIF Bldg., 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20596.

STATE

The Department of State implemented its upward mobility program for civil service employees last fall which presently includes seven participants. The program is fast becoming a "full service" department dedicated to the career development of employees with high potential who have been selected for the program.

The program provides counseling to employees and managers, job identification, job analysis, skills evaluation, selection and placement, development of training plans and monitoring of employee career progress. The program is open to all interested Department of State civil service career or career-conditional employees at grades GS-9 and below, and to veterans or disabled Schedule A employees who are in positions offering limited advancement.

Management is highly supportive of the upward mobility program and provides career opportunities for lower graded employees in the Washington and field offices. Initial posting of upward mobility positions included: passport examiner, communications operator, payroll clerk, office services assistant leading to technical information specialist, and personnel clerk. The second posting in March included: foreign affairs analyst, computer programmer and accounts maintenance clerk. In late May five new positions were posted which included a budget analyst, a passport examiner, two voucher examiners and a payroll clerk.

One hundred and eighty-two employees applied for the initial upward mobility target positions. For each position announced, a panel of four persons, including a representative from the sponsoring office evaluates all candidates according to a formula which assigns points to their present performance, potential, experience, education and training, awards and other achievements. The panel refers to the five highest scoring applicants for a particular position for final selection by the sponsoring office. Since the program includes the field installations in the United States, it provides for the movement of employees between different locations.

Upward mobility participants have a career development plan initiated within thirty days after entry into the program. The plans are designed to assure that the

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State

partcipant acquires the necessary skills, knowledges and abilities needed to perform in the new position.

Counseling is provided before and during the program. Participants are evaluated every three months until completion of their training plan. Participants who fail to meet performance requirements of the program return to their former or similar positions.

Under the leadership and guidance of Ambassador Harry G. Barnes, Jr., Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Personnel, the upward mobility program is gaining momentum. Recently a handbook describing the program was developed for all interested employees, and a brochure on "How to Prepare Your SF-171" was prepared for those who need assistance in describing their skills and experience.

For more information about the Upward Mobility Program, contact the Civil Service Upward Mobility Coordinator, Department of State, PER/CCA, Room 2421, Washington, D.C. 20520.

UPWARD MOBILITY TRAINEES MEET WITH ADMINISTRATOR AND DEPUTY — Five trainees selected to the NHTSA Upward Mobility Program meet with Administrator Joan Claybrook and Deputy Administrator Howard Dugoff to receive congratulations and a reaffirmation of the Administrator's support for the Upward Mobility Program. The trainees began their new jobs on April 16. Pictured left to right are: Deputy Administrator Howard Dugoff, Jane Hilley, Mary Klink, Marion Tomassoni, Napoleon Jasper, Ernestine Scott, and Administrator Joan Claybrook.

The Department of State's first Upward Mobility Program participants, meeting recently with Director General Harry G. Barnes, Jr. are, from left, front row, Susan I. Short; Jacqueline Manley, Upward Mobility Coordinator; Marie A. Nathan and Mr. Barnes who is also director of personnel. Back row, from left: Larry T. Hart, Herbert M. Denault, Jr., and Hiram S. Jones.

Women

they are women; although there is some sense that there has been improvement over time, the majority of the women still report experiencing management and peer opposition with negative management attitudes, apparently more severe than those of male peers.

The primary recommendations made by the task force were: agencies should assess their recruitment practices and, where necessary, modify them to insure sufficient numbers of applicants; training programs for instructors, supervisors and managers at the Federal Enforcement training academies should include sessions on women in law enforcement; women should be used as instructors/counselors at the law enforcement training academies; new performance appraisal systems developed under the Civil Service Reform Act should reflect supervisory/managerial equal employment opportunity performance; and, the OPM, in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, should sponsor a national or series of regional symposia to address the issues raised in the report.

OPM Director Alan K. Campbell has sent the results of the survey to affected agency heads and asked them to take action to implement its major recommendations.

Spotlight

Editor: Ed Shell

The Director of the United States of America Office of Personnel Management has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget through March 31, 1980.

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Co-op Education Programs

Cooperative education programs are an excellent means for Federal agencies to enhance their affirmative employment efforts. Cooperative education programs are for students who, in accordance with a cooperative education working agreement between the school and employer, receive instruction in an occupational field by combining periods of study with periods of study-related paid employment in a Federal agency.

A qualifying college must have a cooperative education program in one or more designated curriculum areas with appropriate administrative and faculty support. It must foster a close relationship between study and work; have a designated staff to coordinate the program; and, schedule work for other than summer or vacation periods alone. Also it must have placed or plan to place more than one student in the Federal Government and sign and support a working agreement with the employing Federal agency.

Co-op students are appointed in the excepted service; however, after completion of the program, they may be, at the employing agency's option, converted noncompetitively to positions in the career service. Of the 1,600 Federally employed students completing co-op programs during Fiscal Year 1978, 57 percent were appointed to permanent positions in the employing agencies.

Currently, co-op education programs cover graduate level, undergraduate level, community and junior college or qualifying technical institute programs. Some 900 colleges and universities have cooperative education programs. Over 600 of them have placed students with Federal employers.

Federal agencies benefit from co-op programs by selecting for career jobs on the basis of proven performance. Some 12,000 co-op students are presently employed by the Federal Government.

One example of a small innovative co-op program was developed by The George Washington University and funded by the Department of Labor in 1976. The program focuses on safety technician training with a speciality in medical institution safety. The objective of the program is to train unemployed, underemployed, economically disadvantaged persons as technicians in occupations which will assure their full employment and the opportunity for upward mobilty.

The Safety Technician Program course of instruction includes Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, institutional industrial hygiene and fire and electrical safety. To date, 19 students (12 minority women, 4 minority men and 3 nonminority men) have completed a rigorous 28-month work/study program designed to train a safety technician who will be able to assist a safety engineer in the identification and evaluation of loss production conditions and practices, communication of accident and loss control methods, procedures and programs.

One succcessful student in the program was Deborah Hoaney who is now a safety technician at the National Bureau of Standards where one of her duties is the inspection of NBS laboratories. Other Federal agencies which have participated in this program are Department of Transportation, National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The George Washington University plans a new safety technician program to begin in late fall. The new program will be for safety technician training with subspecialties in industrial and government safety in addition to medical institution safety.

For more information on cooperative education programs, Federal employees should check with their personnel offices. Most agencies have designated co-op coordinators who can provide information on the program, or Federal employees may review a copy of the Federal Personnel Manual Chapter 308. To learn more about the Safety Technician Program, contact Ms. Janice Grant, Program Coordinator, Cooperative Employment and Training Program, The George Washington University, 2101 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20037.

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